



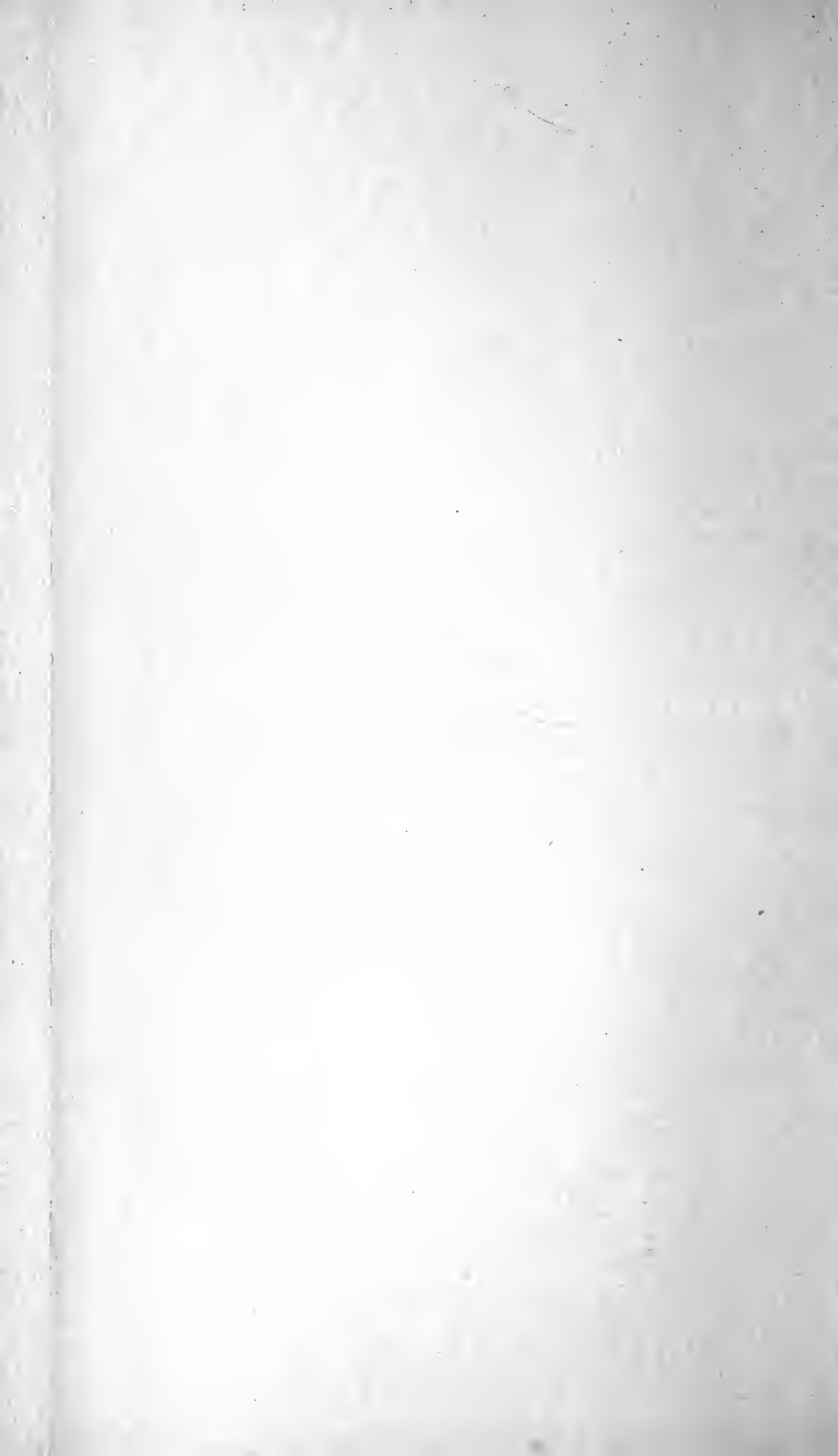
THOUGHTS  
FOR THE  
KIT-BAG

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*Elizabeth Grinnell*



## THOUGHTS FOR THE KIT-BAG







# THOUGHTS FOR THE KIT-BAG

By  
ELIZABETH GRINNELL

FOREWORD BY MALCOLM JAMES MACLEOD



ASSOCIATION PRESS  
NEW YORK: 124 EAST 28TH STREET  
1918

PS3513  
.R75T5  
1918

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YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

APR 12 1918

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## FOREWORD

The author of this little volume is known in California as an authority on birds, her books being used as textbooks in the schools of the state. Her lovely home in Pasadena is known as the "Birds' Retreat" and is a sort of Mecca for bird-lovers from everywhere.

I have spent many a delightful afternoon with her, roaming over her beautiful grounds, as she talked on how many sorts of weed-seeds the linnets eat, and the phœbe's habit of "sitting all alone," and how the woodpeckers scatter their chips about the base of the tree they are working in, and how the warbler makes believe he is wounded when the nest is approached, and how the mocking bird can take a butterfly on the wing, or a grasshopper on the jump. Ah me!

"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed;  
How sweet their memory still!"

And Mrs. Grinnell is not only an ornithologist; she is a many-sided naturalist and a voluminous writer along other lines.

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Her first book was entitled "How John and I Brought Up the Child." Then she has written of "Gold-hunting in Alaska," and of her ten years' life among the Indians, besides several other volumes. When I last saw her some eight years ago, her greatest passion was in finding homes for orphan children.

I once had a rather amusing experience with Mrs. Grinnell, which it may be no violation of friendship to relate. She called to see me one morning and said:

"I am going to have David Starr Jordan and some friends dine with me on Saturday evening and I want you and your good wife to join us."

I said: "Mrs. Grinnell, I'm very sorry, I have never gone out to a Saturday evening dinner in my life and I'm afraid I shall have to ask to be excused."

"Oh, but," she answered, "you must come. You need not dress. Come just as you are, in your overalls, if that will make it easier; I will excuse you immediately after dinner. I want you to know President Jordan—he's such a splendid fellow!"

"But, my dear Mrs. Grinnell, it's Wednesday, and I haven't written one solitary

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line of my Sunday's sermon yet, and, to tell you the truth, I'm beginning to feel a bit shaky. I would love to meet Dr. Jordan and to enjoy your gracious hospitality, but for the life of me I don't see how I can arrange it this time."

But anyone who knows Mrs. Grinnell will understand that with her friends she "doesn't take No for an answer." And after some further skirmishing, she said, as she rose to go:

"Now, dinner is at seven o'clock. I shall expect you."

Finding my pleas of no avail, and evidently weakening somewhat under her commanding insistence, I said as she was passing out the door, thinking myself perfectly safe in the suggestion:

"Well, now, I'll tell you what I'll do. If you write a sermon for me for Sunday morning, we will be delighted to avail ourselves of the great pleasure of dining with you and Dr. Grinnell on Saturday evening."

Quick as a report from a pistol, she returned:

"It's a bargain. Good-by." And off she shot into the orange grove.

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When I returned to my study and rehearsed the incident to my wife, we both laughed over it and passed it off as a characteristic pleasantry. It was a clever way of excusing me and letting me down easy, we agreed, after seeing my homiletical embarrassment. So for the time we thought nothing more about it.

Thursday and Friday were beautiful days—days that only California can boast, but Saturday morning dawned in a down-pour. I have rarely seen such a deluge even in the wettest season of this supposedly rainless state. Bear in mind that California does everything in a big, generous way. It has the biggest trees, and the biggest mountains, and the biggest fish, and the biggest ranches, and the greatest orchards, and the tallest flowers in our land. It has the largest telescope in the world. And when it gets down to real earnest business, it rains Mississippis and Amazons. Nowhere, it seems, are the drops so big, or so pelting, or so wet. Sometimes it takes Jupiter Pluvius a powerful long time making up his mind to start, but once his mind is made up, the old Californian knows it's time to go

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closet-hunting for last year's rubbers and umbrellas and rain-coats.

I spent the morning in my study, putting the finishing touches on my sermon, and rehearsing it to the accompaniment of the driving storm. What was my surprise when about noon a special messenger boy rang my bell and there was handed me a package, which, on opening, I found to be a carefully written sermon of twenty-two large foolscap pages, fresh from the typewriter, on Matt. 4: 1, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

I called my wife and we went into the library and read it together. It was strong and bright and logical and scriptural, and perhaps hyper-orthodox. It had its introduction, its headings, its conclusion. It was a straight-from-the-shoulder clean-cut challenge for the personality of His Satanic Majesty.

"Well, dear," I ventured, as we finished the last page, "it's no joke, is it?"

"It certainly is not," she answered. "I guess we're in for the dinner."

Six o'clock came, and the clouds were still tumbling down in reservoirs. The

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night was dark, the wind was cold. The streets were real rivers, rushing down from the mountains. Oh, such a night! We took our rubber-coats and top-boots and a lantern, and plunged out into the blackness. The distance was about a mile and a half, four blocks of which we had to tramp, or rather wade. It was a fine study in navigation.

On arriving at the "Retreat" and hurrying through the shaded driveway, we remarked how quiet and damp and dimly lighted the home appeared. Could it be a joke after all? So, stealing up on the porch and tiptoeing about, we peered through the window. There was no evidence of the big Stanford President or any guests in drenched attire drying themselves. We walked around to the rear. There was no odor of canvas-back duck or fatted calf. Nothing but an owl or some feathered watchman from his perch in the pepper tree saluted us, as much as to say, "What in the world are you doing out such a night as this?" Then once more we crept up on the porch for another peep through the lattice. But this time one of us had stumbled, and a voice from within rang

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out into the storm, challenging the burglar and calling, "Who's there?"

Many a laugh we had later over our dinner party. I have still the sermon filed away among my literary archives. I have not preached it as yet, but I have read it many times with profit and interest and delight.

Mrs. Grinnell has written some charming stories. She has struck off from her brilliant pen some poetry of a very high order. She is a sermonizer, I can vouch, of no mean art. She is a great Calvinistic theologian; and I think that those who read this little volume will concede that she is a profound religious psychologist.

MALCOLM JAMES MACLEOD.





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It is a good thing to come face to face with a song bird whether alive or in a picture.

I have persuaded this prince of singers to sit upon my hand, and here do I send his photograph, with my hand, to every soldier in every land.

IN his home land this thrasher bird is recognized as the Caruso of arboreal singers. In the melody from his throat, before the shadows rise and dress themselves in the morning, is the combined harmony of gladness and triumph, surprise and peace.

At first it is a warble of welcome, then a love-song as from a joy-breaking heart, then a clear note of victory as when the battle is past, and then a lullaby tender and low. And then he rests, caressing his own breast as if well pleased with himself. And yet no idle dandy is he, for he works for a living, and wears, not the dress suit of robin or oriole, but plain khaki uniform from head to foot.

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THE melody of the thrasher's song, provided the heart's ear be alert, comforts and rebukes, chastens and uplifts, yes, and compensates. In my case, in the early summer of this year 1917, it has shamed me, that I, "a soldier of the Cross," should not be more loyal than to complain.

To rebel is better than to complain. If a person rebel he may be victor or take his punishment with a hard swallow, but to whine one's way through misery is to be a dog.

UNDER the spell of the song bird I was ashamed. And this is why I am sending the bird and my hand and my thoughts to every soldier in every land. In his clear eye may you read the message you most sorely need. As you look long into that clear eye, the window of his soul, some voice within you or outside of you may articulate the message he so silently brings.

LYING here on my cot, under the cypress trees for a hospital ward, surrounded with every comfort, but in the constant pain of a severe wound, I discovered myself pity-

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ing myself; and the thrasher bird's song shamed me.

PITYING oneself all the time soon leads one to be self-centered, peevish, covetous of too speedy restoration. Thus was I convinced that I, of all the world, was the super-sufferer. But I came to myself with long strides of resolve, while the bird sang from the apex of the cypress tree, my heart acting as interpreter in the gloaming. Clear came the song—

“Self pity is a slow poison.

Rise above it or the soul of you will dwindle to a skeleton.

Rise above it. Rise above it.”

Then flew the bird to the tip of a blue gum tree a hundred feet away and caroled a love ditty.

THE suggestion of shame at my self-centered protest against my fate gave place to the resolve that warmed my heart, bidding me do something for others who suffer. The resolve was the fashioning of this little book, no bigger than a breast pocket, albeit I was unable to lift my head from my pillow.

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WITH the resolve came the conviction that loaned me a sense of certain achievement, that one can reach out in the dark, as I am now doing for the pencil and pad, and scrawl a decipherable sentiment, to be interpreted by daylight, and huddled with others of its kind, to be packed at last like birdshot into a shell of a book.

My message must be a single sentiment at a time, for pain and fatigue have a firm grip in spite of the resolve. But now as ever a resolve loyal and true will win.

It is impossible under the circumstances to write in chapters, or do any consecutive work. A paragraph at a time, and only now and then, will make me feel the long summer is not wasted. Were it only for companionship to myself, I would make the effort. Effort is very good medicine.

WHEN I lifted the shotgun one day last winter and took aim at a wicked feline foe about to rob my thrasher's nest, I knew full well that not every little shot would hit the mark, but in all probability one or two would. And so, my soldier friends, may it be with my birdshot thoughts.

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It doesn't take much of a genius to use a shotgun.

THOUGHTS, like birds, sometimes stop to preen themselves, as it were; more often they fly swiftly in a whirr of wings. I catch the whirr of wings and imprison for you now and then a thought. I claim no absolute originality. There is none.

Thoughts are, and were, and always have been, since man began to multiply and replenish the earth with rhetoric.

There is no new thought in all the world, for we but catch the echo of the old ones, calling them our very own, since possibly we have never met them before.

Let us see to it in advance of catching them, that the thoughts we would pursue are worthy, or give up the chase.

I STOOD one day, long past it seems to me, but really little longer ago than yesterday, in the path of a Great Terror. As it passed it smote me hip and thigh, leaving me in helpless agony.

No time was afforded me to resist the attack, but thank God, the soul may withstand resulting conditions and triumph over the flesh.

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THE possibility of triumph over the flesh enthrones the mind as a sovereign—powerful, sublime, like God himself. An explosion of boiling oil in peaceful home pursuits or the shrapnel of the battle field may strike the unresisting flesh, while the soul, the real Person, rises to strike back blow upon blow at pain, and weakness, and despair.

Always the Soul is the Victor.

MATTERS that concern us are so arranged without our knowledge or consent that the flesh habitually takes the soul around with it wherever it goes, and so insures for itself a certain inside armor as it were, like a vest of steel under the coat of a soldier.

True, the soul may be relieved of the flesh at any time without our will or consent, but Life will go on, if so be we have not of ourselves done violence to the soul.

CONFIDENCE in the enduring qualities of the soul, like the sun at midday (which day would otherwise be night), lights the devious road we are traveling to Somewhere—Somewhere being undefined, unlocated, but none the less certain according

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to our faith, our faith in that Somewhere being as reasonably assured as that to-morrow's sun will rise in the east.

THANK God for thoughts that are born of that same reasonable assurance as to the Somewhere we are marching toward—thoughts, not idle musings unworthy of a soldier's mind, but thoughts that make music, or invent, or carve, or calculate, like the faithful tools our thoughts should be.

Thoughts left at random may become pirates, or bandits, or mutineers. Trained thoughts are like soldiers, obedient, brave, loyal to the best Life.

I KNOW a man who all his life has missed the satisfaction of gathering luscious thoughts as one picks fruit from bush or tree; or, gathering a scant handful now and then, he lacked the art of preserving the harvest for future use before it spoiled, as housewives do make marmalade.

GOD is the Great Will personified. The strength of a human life is gone if the will is gone. The will is the strength of any man, as the sap of a tree is its strength.

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When the sap has been drained by long practice from the maple, that grand maple is dead. It can be of no further use in the world but to serve as back logs to the chimney fire. We used to burn such back in Maine, with a regretful memory of the sugaring off that used to be.

God's best gift to man is the will, God's Will being Himself. A man should cherish the power of his will as the miser treasures his hoard.

THE strength of a man's will increases in proportion to its use, whether for good or evil.

A very strong will, made strong by use in the interests of evil, soon destroys the possessor of it.

A very weak will persistently exercised grows high as heaven, and always toward heaven, heaven representing our conception of what is highest.

I SAID "God's best gift to man is the will, God's Will being Himself." What then, can we destroy that part of God which He gave us to profit by?

God gave Jesus Christ, that is Himself,



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to the world, to the whole world for that world to possess.

It is written that by the hand of man Jesus Christ met death. But Jesus Christ is not dead.

A MAN may crucify in himself what was intended for his salvation, but salvation is not dead.

A man's will was intended for his salvation, but if a man do violence to that best gift, he crucifies it as far as he himself is affected.

The Will of God may be changed, so far as the possessor of it is concerned, by a sort of spiritual chemistry into self-poison.

AND God breathed into man the breath of life from His own eternal Source.

If a man hold his breath until he die, has he then destroyed any portion of the Source? He has indeed destroyed himself. The Source is forever, world without end.

THE Will of God is forever. That He wanted us to have and to hold that Will forever, he taught us in the prayer, "Thy Will be done."

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IF a man reject the Will of God, cast it out of the house of his soul as it were, he has nothing left in the house but counterfeit. Always counterfeit is worthless, save as the means of convicting its owner of felony. But the felon conserves his counterfeit that he may pass it as genuine. Some men claim to be doing God's will when they are but counterfeiting.

The value of anything must be great, to be worth so much trouble and danger to the counterfeiter.

There are counterfeit Christians, and true Christians who never heard of God by that name.

How can a man know that his will is God's will? God has given us the ability to know. It is our duty to know. To know is to be like God himself.

A person has no excuse for saying "I do not know" in any vital point.

WE have reason to believe that a "still, small Voice" speaks to every soul. Sometimes it is almost inarticulate, again a whisper, and again a clear insistent voice. There may be evil voices, but these are

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not The Voice, and it is given to every man to distinguish between the voices; else how can he be held accountable, as he most certainly is, for his acts, which grow from his thoughts? It is unexplainable, but none the less incontrovertible, according to the best testimony we have.

THE First Man heard the Voice in the Garden and replied without hesitation. St. Paul, hearing the voice of Jesus for the first time, without visual proof, recognized it and listened.

When Dr. Livingstone in darkest Africa attempted to tell a native wise woman about God, as we understand Him, the so-called savage replied, "O, I am so glad you know about this God. I have known him a long while."

IF one doesn't believe in the Voice, but would really like to hear or know it, one can ask that Voice to speak when all other voices are still, and see what answer he may have. "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" is the Promise.

Did any great commander, any great

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apostle, any great statesman, any monarch even, ever say to the people, "While ye are yet speaking I will answer"?

Is it so much as said of these that they made such a promise? Not the closest adherent of any great leader has assumed so much and so great a thing of a master.

This is one reason why I believe in God with all my might, God as we have been introduced to Him in a very infinitesimal way.

In the soul of us all we see that there must be a Greater Commander of men than belongs to human society. Conceptions of Him, as afforded us, are vastly different and beyond our conceptions of human personality, but this does not abrogate the fact.

NOT all obey the Voice. The interests of man's Church, and man's State, and man's financial affairs smother the Voice. It is a pretty tangled labyrinth, I admit, but God is able. Let us try to find Him.

WHAT shall a man do with a will that has gone wrong? That is a secret worth knowing. It is one of God's secrets. "His

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secrets are with men," the greatest book of reference says.

Go straight and ask the friend of puzzled soldiers, the Y M C A comrade of the puzzled soldier, who is sometimes seen with a checkerboard under one arm and the Book of Reference under the other. I believe he can tell you what to do with a will that has gone wrong.

I have a suspicion that he will tell you there is no other way to relieve the situation when a man's will has gone wrong but to get help from the outside of him.

I HAVE not read of any savage people in the world who are ashamed to be surprised at their prayers, and we are assured that savage folk everywhere do pray. It seems strange that some who are not savages are ashamed if caught at their prayers.

I HEARD of a man who swore by a great oath, "There is no God."

Why does any man swear by God? I suppose it is because there is none greater.

By his very oath a man acknowledges God.

WOULD a soldier of any country stand

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shamelessly by and hear without protest the name of his country's ruler slandered or maligned?

WHEN I began these notes I resolved that the spirit of them should be humorous or philosophical and not at all religious.

As I lie here facing the blue sky, unable to fight or resent physically any possible indignity that might be offered, or even to help myself to a drink of water, I have naturally drifted away from humor and philosophy as such.

It is hard to crack a joke when one is unable to go after a joke or to get away with one if it happened one's way. When a person has recently been or is now on the brink of something desperate, some irresistible crisis which opens upon new and untried life and conditions, one is serious naturally.

Perhaps it is better so, since the soldiers to whom I am sending my little book must of necessity be one and all upon the brink of something desperately serious, whether living or dying.

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BUT note that I am not sad, though serious. No soldier of the Cross and no soldier of his country should be sad. Gladness itself may be serious.

To be glad is to be good. Who ever heard of a professional villain being glad? He may laugh, but his laugh has no note of gladness, rather of irony.

I LAUGH softly to myself in the darkest night at some new comfortable thought that visits me, as if on purpose to be a comrade to me.

And perchance a sick or wounded soldier will laugh softly to himself when some comforting word of mine may reach him.

THOUGHTS of ours are one another's friends, sitting beside us and holding hands and smoothing the brow of pain, or cheering the spirit in weakness. Accept my thoughts, my soldier friend, as they come to me and I send them to you.

It would seem that possibly the happy and healthy and unwounded are not likely to get any of my message. Bless them! When I shall have fought my way to a

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victorious peace with pain and sleepless suffering, my pen may be dipped in the ink of triumphant joy, and to the gladdest of the glad will I indite all the pent-up merriment which has been the portion of my lot hitherto.

To be merry now is out of the question. Should one indulge in merriment at such a time, the wise might confidently conclude that surgical insanity had taken the throne. What one needs is strength, the resolve to win out, the determination to conquer. Thoughts of God give all these and plenty more. Therefore, my wounded friend, let us have thoughts of God. We will be merry when the time comes.

After all, am I wrong? Can a person be merry under fire?

It is twelve o'clock in the night. The stars shine. My pencil is feeling its way across the page, as you and I feel our way across life's page, each of us confident that something good will come out of it all in the morning.

Did I write "in the morning"? Something good is coming out of it now to me



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and I am glad to be alive. Are you glad to be alive?

WHEN a man's conscience is at ease, the citadel of his judgment is in danger of pillage.

YES, I am glad to be alive.

If a person be not loyal to his own life, how can he be loyal to his commander or to his country?

I AM not important enough for a miracle. The conceited ask for miracles. Therefore I pray for patience to wait for natural recovery.

WITHIN ten feet or more of my cot is a colony of honey bees. They work day and night, when the night is not wet or cold. I hear them making gentle melody with their myriads of gauzy wings, and I can see them enter and leave the hive. Always the entrance to a bee hive is as clean as the wax inside.

SOMETIMES a bee heavily laden drops at the doorway, too weary to go further. She

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will probably never rise again, for, once losing heart in impossible work, a bee dies. If she dies upon the threshold, her companions lift her and drop her outside. She may lie on the ground and she may fall into a crevasse.

In like manner have I seen the native American Indians deposit their dead in crevasses or upon the top of the ground. If in a crevasse the dead are safe from marauding wolves, or if on the ground the body is previously wrapped in stout dried hides.

THE more I watch these bees the better I think of what we call inferior beings. I think them superior in many ways. If a honey bee sails away from home for sweets she returns not without them, provided there be any sweets within four or five miles of her starting place. A few flights as long as this enfeeble her wings so that her life's work is finished in three or four months.

But what of the length of any life, if so be that a honey bee or a human shall have done life's work or any part of it with good will and efficiency? Better be a honey

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worker one short summer than an idle human being for seventy years.

I THINK of God as a Person. I seem nearer to Him when I want to call Him. The theologians call Him a great "Being" when they do not call him "God." I think of Him as "Person," as a Father or Brother of our own race, who sees and hears and looks after us long after we have turned away from Him, as if He thought we might turn back. He is glad when we turn back.

I DO not trouble myself about the form of that Person. I would rather know more of His influence and of His spirit. The spirit of any person is more important than the form.

Of course many things are purposely left for us to conjecture or imagine. To comprehend the exact nature of such a Person as *The God* must be I think would crush a human mind.

So I find comfort and strength in imaginings which I am confident are often lighted from above, like rooms with shaded lamps in the ceiling.

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I DO not trouble to understand about the form of the wind which lifts a ship or house, or coaxes a lily to bow its head or a Canterbury bell to ring without sound. The wind to me is Power; God is Person and Power.

IF you feel God-forsaken and miserable, go straight and have mercy upon somebody. By having a stock of mercy and sympathy for others, a man joins hands with God in the great work He has to do. God cannot get along with the work without our help.

How do you know that God is not more miserable than you can possibly be under any circumstances? How do you know but God needs somebody to comfort Him? Let us have mercy on God and give Him as little trouble as possible.

It is in the great heart of God to take so much trouble on our behalf that He would follow us down into shadows and depths and even death to help us. It is a good thing to have sympathy with God in these trying times.

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These thoughts may be new to you, but God is able to make of them a sort of spiritual life insurance when life's war is over.

THERE are office-seekers in politics, the more's the pity, according to the object in view by the seeker. There is one office the most ambitious may attain. Are you, yourself, a worthy administrator or mayor in your little town of Years?

It is strange that nobody seems to remember or to know anything about Mother Time.

Father Time was not gallant when he had his picture taken so many times mowing down the daisies with a scythe. Did Mother Time plant the daisies?

WHAT about a man's will being seemingly as strong as a lion to do the wrong thing?

The Great Reference Book says something about the Saviour of men being a Lion. Let the Lion meet the lion in your soul and conquer.

A MAN'S soul is his battle ground. Shall

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this battle ground be covered one day with the white skeletons of failure and despair, or shall lilies of endurance nourished by heart's blood bear testimony to triumph?

AFTER all that may be said in disfavor of a hermit, no one can doubt that all persons should be absolutely alone occasionally. I suppose that sometimes and under certain conditions a soldier longs to be alone. A friend of mine in France today writes me that "on leave" he invariably goes off by himself, into the country if possible.

A PERSON may have many things and yet his whole life be as bare as a skeleton.

SOME people eat hash habitually, from a mental viewpoint—left-overs from such things as should have gone to the dogs.

Many things are good and wholesome in themselves, but when served with bad accompaniments are poor aliment for the soul. The "movies" are an illustration. Pictures of rare worth, of adventure and achievement, and love, and detective work, would one and all invigorate, were it not for a

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scrap of bad meat, an evil suggestion, or a malicious slander of truth, tossed into the banquet by accident or on purpose.

If one but have the discrimination which is helpful, he may be able to reject the suggestion or the slander and be nourished by the better things.

THE smell of food when one is hungry excites the salivary glands of the mouth; so does the sympathetic suggestion of grief excite the tear ducts of the eyes.

IF you have lost sight of God you would better turn back; you will find Him just where you left Him.

SOMEONE has said that a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city. Better get offended with oneself occasionally than with a brother.

SOME folk wear calico thoughts on their mental backs as they wear calico shirts on their bodies, that shrink and fade in the wearing and washing. He is a favorite of good fortune and hard work who chooses shimmering silk brocade thoughts that will

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“stand alone.” By our thoughts we associate with the nobility of every age and land, or we may crawl in the mire and black ooze with things that disgust, slugs and other slimy forms that revel in filth.

There is some excuse for these, for they continue in their native element; but man belongs to the air and the sky and the forests that are clean and wholesome. He should abide there.

THE difference between a man's wit and the scythe he cuts the hay with is this. He whets the scythe to make it sharp and must keep whetting. Scythes grow dull with the using. Wit grows keen with the using.

GOD gave us the instinct of fear for self-protection. Worry is not fear. Worry is an impediment to travel which we have picked up of ourselves. It does not belong in our kit.

EVERY act of a well-balanced man is honor to God, love of country, and devotion to duty.

Recreation is not forgetfulness of honor,



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or love, or duty. Recreation is a stabilizer of honor and love and duty.

WHAT is it for a man to be lost? He has simply forgotten the way he was going or lost his compass as to direction. When one feels instinctively the lost feeling coming on, one should call to some other traveler just ahead of him, around the corner, or behind the thicket. A person need never stay lost, for there are always other travelers in sight or hearing. This is in regard to the mental or spiritual status of a man.

GOD Himself is never out of hearing, even in the din of battle or the rush and sounds of a cantonment in the making; no, nor on the "long hike" when there has come no word as to the destination.

God is our destination. Let us hang that up on the wall of the soul.

THE "Better Land" of our childhood—"shall we not seek it and toil no more?" We call it "The Better Land" because it is farthest back in memory.

I AM watching a garden toad beside my

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camp in the potatoes. He burrows with his back feet until he makes a hole for half his body and then he works the soil out ahead of him until he is out of sight. He never goes down his burrow after it is made, head first. He would face the enemy.

Too lazy to dig himself a burrow, or hole, the toad one day appropriated that of my pet ground squirrel, who had runways all over the place. Squirrel came to the door and espied Toad, saying with chattering teeth at the intruder, "Get out." Toad backed down an inch and dared Squirrel to "come on." Squirrel looked perplexed for half a minute and then ran swiftly away. Toad came nearer the surface with a satisfied expression of countenance and blinked in the light of the early sunshine. Suddenly Toad got a boost from behind that sent him ten feet away, a pretty surprised would-be appropriator of other folks' labors. Squirrel followed, with a look of "There now" plainly written upon her face. She had remembered an opening somewhere at the other end of this tunnel.

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JUST watching the maneuvers of these two small creatures helped me to bear my pain for the whole day. So does heaven send us alleviation from unlooked-for sources.

IN all nature there is craving for light, and more light. Seed germs look out of windows for light; so do lily bulbs long for light, and sunflowers turn their faces to the east to greet the sunrise of a new morning.

Is not death the door by which we may come to the Great Light which all our life we are craving?

MY thrasher and other birds were not always birds. Neither shall we be always in our present form. Somewhere in the dim and distant past a reptile or a family of reptiles bade good-by to the saurian tribes and became a bird or birds. Other reptilia remained as they were, and are—no ambition; no rising out of the dust and slime to scale the vault of heaven by flight, and to gladden the heart of God and the heart of us by song.

I SAW a sparrow just now, singing to a

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long green lizard, both resting on a fallen log.

"Sing, bird, sing!" I cried. "You crawled out of the window of opportunity and became a great singer to cheer the heart of all the world. God is the Great Opportunity for all living things."

I am a "living thing" and I will go to the window.

It is of no use to grow sour. A little sugar is essential to the nourishment of the body. Sweets in some form are essential to the soul of us. If necessary we must borrow sweet from those who have it to spare. But, we must pay it back.

It is not necessary to be silly to be sweet. Sweet thoughts are what makes a person redolent of healthful influences. The love of beauty in flowers and birds and forests and fields gives a flavor of sweets to the possessor.

The love of sweet music or color or fragrance sweetens a life otherwise unwholesome.

The love of a sweet girl or a faithful wife or a loyal comrade neutralizes the

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bitter acid of an otherwise unwholesome soul.

A SINGLE snowflake melts and passes away at once, disappearing into the Nothing. A mass of snowflakes may be moulded into beautiful forms or beaten into a solid wall.

One single desire, or effort, alone and unaccompanied disappears without trace. A mass of desires and efforts moulds beautiful forms or unscalable walls.

OBEDIENCE to the right is a result of voluntary choice. Coercion is for the body, and a very good thing.

GOD gave terror to alleviate extreme physical suffering, as physicians do give anesthetics. When terror looms fierce and sudden, the body forgets itself. Terror cannot become habitual like fear, for prolonged terror would be a murderer of body and mind.

A person of himself cannot summon terror, but he may invite fear of the proper things to fear, and be better equipped for it.

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## *Thoughts for the Kit-Bag*

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IF God, as Lincoln said, loved the common people best because he made so many of them, then I would add God must have loved the common little beings very much. He made so many of them—birds and bees and creeping things. He made my thrasher bird, that I might by its song lift me beyond my pain.

Let the birds lift you, my comrade.

FOR a long while I had noticed a little grey, harmless house spider on a cash register at my grocer's store. I asked the grocer "Why?" He replied, "That little spider has a mission. When I feel like cursing a bad debtor the spider diverts me."

My grocer has learned a secret.

UNTIL one has suffered, the most essential of life's lessons has not been learned. To "skip" suffering is to skip one of the most indispensable grades in school.

One may skip a grade, but the reckoning comes at the close of school. The parchment one has worked for may be withheld by the Master. I do not know how it may be in the simile, but "Make it up" is a hard

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word on graduation day. We must take the grades as they come or ultimately lose heart and the best opportunities.

The problem of suffering is no more to be overlooked than that of compound interest.

My nurse just surprised me with my pencil and pad. "You shouldn't do it," she said. "It is too much effort. Give me the pad." "No," I replied, "I would not deserve recovery if I made no effort to forget." She returned the pad and pencil. "You are right," she said. "Go on."

BUT often I find the same thought or sentiment recurring to me which I wrote yesterday or last week. I am repeating. If my reader does not find it worth while to read it twice, he may read it three times.

JUST at daybreak on the morning of the ninth week. No one is astir save my garden spider, who loves dim dawn better than bright light. I can see her against the silver of the sky at her aerial occupation, she, like the true patriot that she is,

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hastening to the call of duty, as she understands it.

She is climbing an invisible line hand over hand, and now she drops. My impulse is to arrest her fall, for she relinquished her seeming hold many feet above the ground. I move a trifle for a cross light on my vision, and behold, she is spinning an infinitesimal line as she falls. She does not fall, she softly descends, finding a foothold on the apex of a slender twig. She now ascends her own original rope and returns to the high point where she began.

THIS round grey spider is my daily dawn companion. She inspires me. It is good of God to have thought of creating spiders for such a purpose. It was by her manifest instinct as illustrated that the familiar term has come to us concerning any person in mortal peril, "His life hangs by a thread."

Even so she has within herself the means of arresting her fall. The life line is of her own making and by her own effort she arrests her doom. So does the Creator impart wonderful secrets to spiders.



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AGAIN, at daybreak. A moth has flown against the well-adjusted web of my spider. The net was spread in the dark, but in the open and plain view of the moths who also carouse by night, night being broad day to moths and spiders.

The graceful moth should have avoided the net. But other moths were also abroad dancing upon polished floors that never existed. They are in mid-air, these invisible waxed floors; not high, moths do not seek the higher altitudes, nor do spiders.

The carousal is on. There is music; I know it by the rhythm of gauzy wings, but my gross ear cannot hear it. The spider waits. This is not her first experience with moths at dawn. But this moth is having its initiation into the mazes of danger. He cannot escape, though he puts forth marvelous efforts. He should have had his wit earlier!

The aerial dance goes on to the harmony of the silent stringed instruments of the wind.

With my long pointed stick, with which I also toast marshmallows in the fireplace ten feet away from my cot, I tear that

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spider's web all to pieces, annihilate it. The spider retreats behind a barricade of cypress twigs.

NEXT morning at dawn. My spider friend has woven a new web in place of the old. It was finished while I dozed, grateful for a short unconscious interruption of my pain.

Moths are carousing in the dim light, as at yesterday's dawn. Some of these also are victims of the spider's scheme. This time I will not tear the web. These moths have seen comrades one by one caught and destroyed and they should have provided themselves with forethought.

The dance goes on and the sun rises, signal to the world of moths to postpone further carousals.

SPIDERS make no secret of spreading their nets for the unwary. It's "up to" the moths to keep out of them. There is no more familiar and entertaining companion than a garden spider. As for the moths, I never see them do anything but dance in mid-air and tangle their wings in spiders' webs.

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AN hour later. My nurse is peeping from the window of her room quietly to see if I am ready for company and breakfast. I smile, but make no reply. God has sent me company, and refreshment of thought.

THAT fireplace of mine is a godsend. I made it of cobble stones and mortar with my own hands when I was well and hearty of spirits. I am glad I did it. Now that I am helpless I watch the fagots burn and waste to ashes, or toast my bread sticks with a ten foot "sucker" from the base of a peach tree.

If I hadn't thought of that fireplace when I was well, I should now have been dependent upon the efforts of the kitchen stove, which is out of my zone of sight.

If I had not, when I was well, laid the cobble stones of thought into a sort of fireplace in my mind, I should now have been without the resources of self-entertainment. The business of self-entertainment is profitable "in the long run."

AT midnight I woke, within me a feeling of perfect serenity, though my wound was

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asserting its rights in pressing diction. It often speaks, as you, my wounded soldier friend will realize in your own case.

As I woke I "heard" a thought. It was this, the exact form of which I had not before heard. I pass it on. I may live indefinitely, as may you, but never shall I forget the message:

"At thought of the near approach of death I feel a Support which I know is God."

It needs no theological commentator to divulge its significance. My faith is radiant. Can you catch the glow of it?

Now I am in lighter vein, still serious, however, a day or two after the last paragraph.

Humor sometimes saves the day. A small boy in our little city fell in the school playground and broke both legs, and one arm. On the operating table he whimpered, as who would not? But the little fellow had resources, saved up within his small soul in advance of the hour of need. No wolf of despair was at his door. When the good work was nearly finished, the boy looked up in his surgeon's face and said

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quaveringly, yet with a faint smile of humor, "Say, Doc, wish I'd broke the other arm—then I wouldn't have to wash my face and hands every time Mother calls me in to supper. It's so trying, you know, on a feller to have to wash up so often."

So does the memory of what was at the time a really serious matter abide to cheer us in later hours. The memory of just soap and water struck the crazy bone of that little fellow at the opportune moment of his life.

THOUGHTS are rulers of the body. The body should be a holy shrine fit for the dwelling place of royalty.

WHAT some people need is less of Things and a good deal of actual poverty. Poverty originates, and makes over, and tends to make the recipient thankful.

SOMEONE has said, "I am an old man and have seen many troubles, none of which ever happened." So may a soldier see many battles and experience many a death, none of which he will ever meet.

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THE grace of God can keep a person from being disagreeable as well as from being a criminal.

MY memory is hard of hearing sometimes and so I catch only the tail of an idea, but hold fast to it.

SOME people's minds are always out at the elbows, run-down as it were. They need new thinking apparel, as a fellow needs new shirts and shoes. Thoughts are the clothing of the mind, regal or very shabby.

MY friend who called to see me has just gone, saying on leaving, "How fascinating must be the repose of inanimate things after the fight; even the face of death must seem beautiful in the absolute repose of death." He didn't stop to think of the effect which that last word might have upon my mind when I am not able to lift myself.

And yet, thinking it over, it shouldn't make me sad. It is only the coward or the remorseful soul that fears death. The coward should brace himself, and the re-

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morseful soul should make amends, and then he will be glad of death.

I am not a coward; endurance assures me of that. As for remorse, I settled with that long ago. It is a good thing to settle with remorse before disaster overtakes one.

BALZAC says, "I envy God, who can read the undercurrents of the heart."

STEWART Edward White says, "The more tired out the native African is, the louder he sings."

ARE you temporarily blind? Remember the old trick of tying a handkerchief tight around your eyes in the game of hide and seek? Fancy yourself blind; Fancy is so kind. You fancied you were blind then, in the game, and you couldn't possibly open your lids. Try it now with the bandage tight. "Try to find her." "She" is dodging here and there in your memory. Memory is so kind and true. Let us be thankful for memory.

No man can be permanently blind. Take heart! Philosophy and stoical endurance

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may help a fellow, but faith is the shoulder to lean on. God, whose other name is Jesus, has promised sight to the blind, the temporarily blind. He is coming with the new eyes. Wait just a little longer until your turn comes. He has so many to look after, but He overlooks not a single one. I think He will remember the blind first.

My beloved thrashers have returned, after being absent a week. So does many a joy we thought had vanished return to gladden us again.

THREE days after. The thrashers built a nest above my fireplace on a drooping bough. When it was almost finished they changed their mind. They are now busily at work taking it all apart and carrying every stick and straw to a point farther away from the occasional smoke. Last year they reared a nestful of birdlings right in the smoke.

What a joy these birds are to me!

In appearance they are similar. I distinguish the male only by his song and by his dominance over his mate. Now he is rushing her at the nest building, following



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her, seeming to drive her, as if any woman housebuilder wouldn't make haste as fast as she could! I think she should turn and drive him.

Thrasher men are cowards, if but their mates stand up for their rights.

I REALIZE that one cannot help being "afraid" sometimes. To be afraid is not weakness; I realize this also. Fear without mental hysteria is the advance scout of strength. Fear means instant preparation.

To fear Fear is to be ready. "I am not afraid" is as often the slogan of the coward as of the hero.

BALZAC says, "The mainspring of happiness is within ourselves."

Happiness or "calm" may become a fixed habit, useful and influential—useful, in tiding oneself over trials, or influential to one's fellows. There is a family likeness between calm and happiness. Calm is of peace; happiness is of activity.

"NEVER had much use for the Y M C A" when you were at home and life was full of

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everything and everybody else? The Young Men's Christian Association doesn't lay that up against you! You used to think they were "queer"? They are queer, I admit.

The synonyms for queer are "uncommon, extraordinary, unique." Is not the Y M C A all these and a hundred times multiplied? There comes one of their number. How invigorating is the sight of him, upright, tender, every inch a *man*! He reads you an extract from the Book that is under his arm. It is neither stale, nor bitter, nor sour, nor suggestive of hints that irritate and censure.

WHAT this unique man reads to you in the meager light is as full of "meat" as the chestnuts you used to gather back home or the Christmas cocoanut. The "meat" is bracing to a convalescent, or even to one possibly in "the shadow" just before the eternal dawn.

Now perhaps he arranges your pillow, if you have a pillow. If not, he and you can make-believe. And now maybe he proposes a "game." Or he will crank the victrola. O, these welcome heaven-sent

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victrolas! You see, victrolas are not in a soldier's kit. Neither are the other musical instruments, the organ or the piano or the violin; they belong in the kit of your Y M C A comrades.

I SEE your comrade walking away to some other soldier boy and your eye follows him. He is whistling "Yankee Doodle" or "Tipperary" or some other of the soldier's "hymns"; perhaps it is "Abide with Me," or "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," or "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Your heart follows him with something like a prayer, though you may not recognize it as a prayer, but God does. "Queer sort of a fellow," the Y M C A man?

O, THE weariness of weakness when a person is convalescing! Thank God for the border land of sleep, where the exile meets the friends of other days.

A man is like a nation, when the crisis is passed. The convalescence of a man and that of a nation is God's order. It takes time and patience, and much philosophy with a good deal of "pep" to meet the situation. You see I know a little of what

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it is. Thank God that I do know a little, else I couldn't think so often of my soldier friends.

You may have already come to know that the pain of repair is harder to bear than the initial disaster. I have come to know that, and to wince under the operation, and schemes, and blows, and gnawing labors of the nerves and wounded blood vessels and bruised or torn tissues, accommodating and limiting themselves to an utterly new condition of affairs.

In spite of the suffering endured it is interesting to "feel," if one cannot see, the fight going on between the loyal cells of the flesh and marauding enemies from outside, striving to arrest and even to kill the patriotic invisible soldiers of the body.

Look at it that way, soldier boy.

SOMETIME in the fifteenth century Laurence Sterne is said to have caught the whirr of a thought, preserved it, wrapped it in poesy, and tossed it over the years to us.

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," he wrote.

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The assurance that God cares for lambs has been a satisfaction to many a perplexed and perishing one. But I do not think the poet was as well acquainted with God as he might have been. Had he bethought himself to give some credit to the efforts of the lamb in seeking shelter and relief from its shorn condition, he would have but given the lamb its due, and God the credit of acting impartially toward lambs of whatever sort.

Laurence Sterne had more in mind the storm than the lamb, the supposed miracle than the object of pity. For common folk like you and me to place our faith in the probable interference of miracles in our behalf is to insure to ourselves disappointment and possible loss of faith in the end.

THE true meaning of the idea from the view-point of one well acquainted with God would seem to transpose the text to read *God tempers the shorn lamb to the wind*. This would place some responsibility on the lamb. One lamb may stand still and shiver, while another equally "shorn" will take a bee line for the fold.

For all we know, storms may be the

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servants of God sent forth since the beginning of time to their duty.

Should we ask God to interfere with His orders and change His mind, so to speak, on account of a solitary lamb like you or me who hasn't the intelligence to run for cover?

May you and I, shorn lambs of the flock, help God to keep us in good condition of mind and body, that we may grow more wool, so to speak, before the next wind howls our way; get back the strength to endure, and keep warm to every good thing. We may grow even better protection than we had in the soul of us before we were "shorn" or tempted or stricken.

WE have a perfect right to lay claim to the God of winds and lambs, accepting the miracle of Himself, and so believe in the Great Miracle, with no need of the miraculous interference of nature's laws.

He who prays that the north wind may stop blowing because he is cold is a coward, deserving neither roof nor covering for his shorn back.

God naturally expects more of men than of lambs, and we ought to respect God

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enough to see to it that He shall not be disappointed in us.

WE ought to see more universal respect for God, though some there are who think of Him or worship Him as an ideal. Do we not have respect for an ideal? High ideals are profitable.

God is an Ideal, but ideals are not God.

A man may seek a realization of his ideals all his life and not find it, or, finding it, miss the opportunity, for lack of years, of going on to the finish.

"Go on to the finish" is the clamor of high thoughts. Therefore, some do see the emergency of death that is the halting place, in advance, and grasp the everlasting Ideal, that they may "go on to the finish" of high ideals. For God alone is declared to be "the author and finisher" of what He promises or undertakes to do.

God is the Great Ideal.

IT is just like God to think of tempering a shorn lamb to the wind. That same wind, in the interests of the whole flock, ought not to be tempered. A good strong wind right out of the north may be as

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necessary as good pasture. A cold wind helps to harden the flock, and to strew plant seeds for next year's necessities.

SOME men confuse destiny with the God of destiny. Destiny is the servant and not the master. God thought about destiny, and so destiny is necessary. God thought about men, to join hands with Him in ruling the results of destiny.

God, not destiny, is the master of men if men so will. Destiny is the natural result of God's laws. We have no right to ask God to interrupt His laws, which He has thought out in the silences of His own eternity.

DESTINY may operate in the explosion of boiling oil when the victim of it has been careless, or in the aim of the shrapnel when a man has paused in the path of shrapnel, but here destiny is done and God takes a hand. When God takes a hand it is time to pray.

Who ever said a prayer to destiny?

To say a prayer to destiny would be like breathing upon the face of a glacier to warm its heart.



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Whom has destiny comforted in the hour of death? Whom has destiny lifted from the "mire and the clay," at the prayer of a man, and set upon a rock, speaking in eternal cadence, "I, even I, am thy God"?

IN the heyday of health and prosperity a man in the exuberance of his little soul may exclaim, "There is no God. All is destiny. Let simple folk believe in God!" But let that same man face death at the point of an enemy's bayonet or on the verge of a mighty chasm, and he will be very likely to cry, "Save me, O God." And ten to one God will save him.

THERE may be a God after all! Some say there is none because they have never seen Him; neither have they seen the wind nor the electric current.

God is such a strange Person, always surprising the sinner with His generosity, and the theological saint with a difference of opinion.

SELF-ESTEEM is a virtue, provided it does not breed egoism. If a man esteem not himself, how can others hold him in

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estimation? Self-esteem is the twin of self-respect.

THERE are times when a man longs to be a hermit, to live all by himself in a bark hut and eat rabbits and wild garlic, to lie around in the brush all day doing nothing, excepting possibly to think poetry.

It is rumored that God made the original man a hermit, but that he soon repented Himself, for reasons, we suppose, perfectly obvious to Himself.

HAS anybody observed a recluse who is real wholesome to look at? Usually he is absolutely "dirty." Those who are in the business of turning men right about face from being nothing to being something tell us that the first step in the proceeding is to make them "wash up" and look in the mirror, the mirror being an excellent device to aid in reforming a man.

A professional recluse in the mountains was once presented with a looking-glass for a Christmas gift. The glance of a second was sufficient to cause this hermit to dash the gift to the rocks.

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IF it be winter time and one is on a march, let him pick up a small stone and put it in his pocket. At the first opportunity heat it real hot and wrap it in paper. It will retain its heat many hours and is a very capable bedfellow, especially if there be a crowd about the only fire in camp. A hot rock, the bigger the better, is a soul saver. So many rocks just the size of a fellow's pocket lying about, inviting men to be comfortable!

A PERSON should covet humor as he would covet a promised inheritance. The man who inherits a vein of humor from his ancestors has sufficient means to carry him comfortably through life.

Even in pain or other discomforts a man may lay hold on humor if he have any about him. Without *pain* a man would be dead before he knew it. Try out a little humor on the pain. Beat it! Make believe it "doesn't hurt."

IF you have to cry, why cry! Some of the world's greatest heroes have cried in their time, and weren't ashamed of it. But don't give in when the pain stabs.

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Tears make little rivulets in the mind as do raindrops in the garden, draining off afterwards, leaving a richer heart and a better garden for the shower.

Cry hard when you cannot help it, but do not whine. A dog that howls is more endurable than a dog that whines.

It may take a battle or two and a score of wounds to open a man's eyes upon God. Then will come the angel of revelation to show him that God was in the trenches or in the hospital or on the open field and breathing on his wounds, while as yet he couldn't see God for the mist that was in his eyes. Indifference is only mist. Ignorance is only mist. God is clear Light.

SEE that you sing in the dark days, as the Southern darkies sang in the old slave days to get "de misery" out of their whipped backs. Make up a song as you go along or as you sit in the shackles, crude and droll like the songs of the darkies—to be sung long afterward in church and hall and battlefield in a chorus of jubilee.

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WHEN comrades are dying, think of them as getting out of prison. Let the old prison crumble, it will but set the prisoner free. There is always a squad of heavenly hosts waiting for a fellow to get out of his prison, that they may conduct him to the place of his wildest imagination. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard," but O, the wealth of imagination offered to a man in the cup of God's eternal goodness!

Imagination is a holy cordial; drink it!

"O, so dirty," are you? No clean linen, and no clean skin? I suppose St. John on the Isle of Patmos, prisoner that he was, felt the need of a bath and a shave more than anything else in the world, unless it were clean linen. That is why in his Revelation he has left us visions of "clean linen pure and white." A neglected prisoner may catch a glimpse of visions to stir a world centuries after him.

THIRSTY, are you? So was One on Calvary. And yet from those same parched lips there came the message, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Did He thirst that He might assuage *our*

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thirst? Ask the Y M C A brother-man to explain it.

I suppose that if you come home to us you will say that you suffered more from thirst after being wounded than from the wounds. I know this, that while the "firing line" was taking my breath away I cried incessantly for water. Thinking of this universal cry for water when a person is in the peril of pain, as if nothing but water could save, the Lord himself, being the only one able to save, cried to all the world, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Freely!

THERE seems to be just one thing that God is able to forget, and that is a man's sins, under certain strange conditions. Let us be like God in one particular, forget the other man's sins against us, on purpose.

GUARD against mosquitoes; do not let them bite you. They have bitten somebody else first. Look sharp for attacking parties that have bitten others first, very much to the chagrin and misery of those other fellows.

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WE have heard of distant tribes of men who are said to carry about with them wherever they go a little prayer rug, conveniently strapped upon their back or on the camel's back. This comfortable memento acts as a reminder to both body and spirit. The knees naturally bend at sight of the reminder and an otherwise reluctant spirit is compelled into service.

A little shrine in a man's soul is a sort of prayer rug, soft and inviting for the knees of his heart. If you haven't any prayer rug along with you, ask the Y M C A man to help you out. These strange men have a wonderful faculty of supplying necessary comforts.

No nightgown? No pajamas? Our forebears slept without these luxuries and any fellow can get used to it if he has to, in the interests of a good and common cause.

It is sometimes the "having to" that puts the "grit" in a man. How few of us would do the really disagreeable duties if we didn't "have to."

Even in the face of "no pajamas" one can laugh. A good hearty laugh will see

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to it that a man sleeps more soundly than he would in pajamas without the laugh.

A GREAT many respectable people have been in jail. It is well to recall this fact when the guard has turned alike his back and the key to one's cell.

If the dead do sometimes haunt their old whereabouts, one may be sure of good company when he finds himself in prison for no crime. It is hard, though, after all that can be said in favor of good company. You had imagined you had hard times before? So I think imagined Paul and Silas, loyal and true soldiers, imprisoned long ago by a relentless enemy.

Paul and Silas were their simple names as we know them. That they did hold, and have since held, a higher rank than most army officers attain, cannot be doubted. They were soldiers of the Cross, and are commanding today, by word of mouth, a larger company, if we consider the "innumerable company" St. John saw in his vision, than any army commander at the present time.

THESE soldiers of the Cross were not



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men to be found without a prayer rug in their kit, a little shrine in the soul of them; and they immediately prayed. And for whom did they pray, these men who had an intimate acquaintance with our Lord; who, according to His promise, had every reason to believe, as you and I have reason to believe, that He was in the prison with them? Knowing the character of them as well as we do, we have reason to believe they were praying for those who should come after them, who in every land might be longing for freedom.

And then, after the prayer, immediately they began to sing. A note of triumph in advance of the victory! A psalm of holy glee that not upon their inmost souls had the jailer locked the cell door! O, cell doors are strong! But stronger yet is the winning force of God.

ONE of the first things I will do when I find heaven will be to look up Paul and Silas and beg them to sing once again that song that reached the ear of an angel somewhere and brought him straight into the prison. A song from the lips of men in prison, a song to move the heart of an

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angel, though I suppose and believe that it was the Lord Himself who opened the prison doors!

WILL an angel open your prison door? I think not. God gave us this bit of prison history as a sort of divine assurance that a prisoner's cell may be a sanctuary. But keep watch for the Angel! It is possible you may mistake an angel for a Y M C A man.

No man, of his own deliberate intent, will betray the best interests of his body. A man's body may be scarred and yet be glorious. It depends upon whether the scars are self-inflicted or the result of honorable combat.

It is good for one's body to salute one's mind, as if the mind were the commanding officer, as indeed it is.

SHOW no mercy to insolent thoughts.

Insolence, even in a man's mind, should not be tolerated. See to it that all your valiant senses are genuinely loyal citizens of the soul, worthy of respect and promotion.

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MEET possible ridicule of loyalty to honor with the bayonet charge of courage.

Repulse rude insinuation that lurks under cover of secrecy. Open the soul to daylight. It is from under cover that some of the soul's enemies charge.

Do you remember telling me of your habit of holding debates with yourself upon important questions without a sound? A man is never subject to melancholy who is able to debate intelligently with himself, rising above the temptation to regret or despair. One may get a clearer view of any situation in communion with himself than when words darken the sky.

MIDNIGHT! Everyone asleep but me. Do not pity me. The pain is sharp, but sharper still is my determination to get this message to you.

It is written of the righteous, "Ye are the salt of the earth." It sometimes seems to me, lying here in the night (it is dark while I am writing now), that I am principally salt, I shed so many briny tears.

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Not that I am in the least "righteous"—far from it!

Do you sometimes cry big salt tears with the pain and weakness from sheer helplessness to do anything else? I suspect you do, though you wouldn't have anybody know it for anything, because you are a man. Well, it may become one's legitimate business to shed tears. It is written of a certain truly great man, quoting his own words, "My tears have been my meat day and night." Pretty hard row for a man to hoe, though we do not know exactly where the pain was.

Have you not noticed a recuperative reaction following the shedding of tears, that tones up the mental and physical forces, like a bitter tonic doctors sometimes prescribe?

Better to cry and have done with it than to grow irrevocably sullen.

I HAVE concluded that mental pain cannot equal physical pain, though mentalists declare to the contrary. So-called mental pain is not pain; it is distress. Mental distress may not invariably affect the body, especially if the body is exercised to the

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tiring of the muscles. But continued and extreme physical pain does affect the mind if the mind does not resist.

Remorse, resentment, hurt feelings, homesickness or disappointment, not to mention "affairs of the heart," are distressing; an acute attack may almost kill a person, provided he do not resist. Usually one can walk it off, or take to his heels and run away from it.

Physical pain that has pitched its unwelcome tent in that wound of yours, and mine, is harder to deal with; but of one thing I am certain—in the face of all difficulties the mind can make a bold stagger in attempts to "walk it off."

FANCY is the gift of God. Though you may become blind, Fancy may sit upon the throne of lost vision and bid you "Look."

Perhaps your sight may be soon restored, and perhaps not; but God's gift of fancy may join hands with you and your comrade Memory, and lead you into realms never before dreamed of. You may call it "dreaming" if you will, but dreams are real individuals when they come to be constant companions.

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CONSTANTLY to repine is to die by slow degrees without a principle to die for. It is preferable to get angry. Anger grows immediately ashamed of itself, while complaint justifies its grumbling on the grounds of self-pity. Self-pity is poor fodder, neither grain nor hay nor silage. Cut it out.

Do not think about tomorrow. You are blind just for today. Fancy that your boyhood days are come again and you are playing blind man all over the farm, and house, and school grounds.

How seldom you stubbed your toes! Do not let your mind bump against this new condition, rough though it is and full of obstacles. Keep a level head and give Fancy the bit; but see to it that you pull her in before she turns the corner.

In your next interview with Fancy, make her understand that you are the master, not she. Even Fancy must be guided or she will land you in the ditch.

THOUGHTS of the soldier boys at the front or in training camp have helped me bear my pain.

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The command is to all of us, whether absorbed in home duties or in the inevitable fatigue of the training, or in the rough of the front—"Endure hardness as good soldiers." We may engrave this command in enduring emblems, each upon his own shield.

Time cannot erase such a sentiment written upon personal experience and character.

Do you feel that you are literally a "complete wreck," ready to go home, or to the permanent hospital for indefinite and imperfect repair?

When a beautiful and substantial building has been supposedly destroyed by earthquake and fire, the wreckage company comes to save what remains for other uses. There is always a residue that does not perish, twisted iron, bent pipes, precious metal of every description, charred pillars, broken bricks from tottering chimneys, even cement and plaster having their uses.

God saves a wreck of a man because even what is left of him is useful in a world where nothing is wasted.

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I SOMETIMES think it comes pretty near being a good thing for me to lie here so long. It gives plenty of time for memory to visit me. Memory has feet that scramble into every nook and corner, and little sharp eyes which nothing in our past evades, and sharp ears keen for the sounds we thought were dead.

My nurse is God's hands, His face, His strength to me. A surgeon is God's power manifest in a human form. Watch him as he bends above you. Feel sure of him, as you do feel sure of God.

THE supports of God are tangible; nothing mystic about His preparations and resulting forces.

No need have you and I to make a mystic of God, when we have been once down into the dark drear desert of pain and climbed back again to the green edge of things where forget-me-nots and hearts-ease are growing.

WHY do we call our Great Commander and Heavenly Father "God" sometimes, and "Jesus" sometimes? It is the mood or



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the need we are in that decides upon the name we call Him by.

Do we not call each other "husband" or "wife" or "Claude" or "Mary"? Do not we call loudly for "Bill" or "Brother," either of the two meaning the same person? Do we not call the Judge "Your Honor" or "The Bench"? Did not our parents call us "Son," or "Boy," or "Mischief"?

AT mess time? No home "grace," no family greetings, no refined expeditionary force from plate to lips; no napkin, no conversation to facilitate digestion of contrary opinions, and no diversion of thought from the bare sensuous satisfaction of eating? You would prefer taking your rations to the shade of the old barn or down by the sociable little brook of boyhood. You would like to eat with the cows and the tree rats, with old Bowser for extra.

Especially you do not admire your elbow companion, either of them perhaps; it often seems incredibly dull?

Suppose you try the experiment of saying over and over to yourself, "He is a nice fellow; really a very fine fellow, all

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but his table manners." You have believed worse fibs than that many a time. I have tried this method myself and found it profitable and successful, especially when the idea came to me that my ill-mannered messmate was really dying of homesickness, or remorse, or even possible contempt of himself.

THERE was a certain Great Man, of whose conduct and practices nothing could be said in criticism save this charge, "He eateth with publicans and sinners." How remarkable that this Man, altogether lovely and of good report, should of his own volition sit at "mess" with the most ill-behaved men of his time.

And how strange that the historians of Jesus should have chronicled so insignificant a circumstance!

NOTHING was insignificant in that Life. Was it not for your sake that He ate with publicans and sinners, instead of banqueting with kings and governors of His time, at whose table He properly and often most welcomely belonged? Imagine Him at "mess" with you, my soldier friend, as

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He really is, unseen and unheard, sitting between yourself and your disagreeable elbow companion.

BEWARE of renegade thoughts! There may be whole packs of them eager to devour you piecemeal and altogether, like wolves. Get away from all these hungry wolves as God knows you can get away if you stay with Him. If these wild creatures have already torn you do not despair, for they cannot make your soul bleed to death if you fight to the finish.

What is a soldier for if it isn't to fight to the finish!

LET go of your misery! Try not to think so much about it. One's own misery never can be quite equal to the misery of some other fellow. It is because our own misery is so near to us that we keep thinking about it all the time. If we should get as near to some other person as we are to our own miseries we might feel as if we ourselves were pretty well off in comparison.

A SOLDIER has wonderful opportunities to be of use to his fellows, of use or of dis-

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advantage. In citizen life, comrades are mostly far apart in families and in occupations, with little time for fellowship. But in military life a man has opportunities thrust upon him. Surely each soldier, brave and strong man that he now is, will be summoned to give an accounting to the Great Commander for all these wonderful opportunities, whether improved or wasted.

AT first thought one might think it "poor form" or very cowardly if a man, for the first time, should call out to God for help in trouble of some sort, when in all his life he may not have given God a single loyal or even respectful thought. One may sometime have even ridiculed the "very idea of God helping anybody out of trouble." One may even have blasphemed, being in company with the profane.

DISTRESS is just the proper time and opportunity for God to get acquainted with miserable men. Somehow one does not so much need Him in glad days, not having yet learned that our Lord is the

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soul of gladness itself. But now this very day of a big trouble is the time to call Him by name. Has He not left a message especially for you, "Call upon me in the day of trouble," "While they are yet speaking, I will hear"?

It is just as though God, by that promise of His, was so near a fellow all the while that it took Him no time at all to answer. If a man in your place were to "call" upon the President, or a commanding officer, it might take long days, if ever, to gain an audience. But with God it is so different.

It seems to be God's especial business to be listening all the time. O, the sublimity of a Commander like Him!

THANK heaven, God is often the Last Resort.

It is just like God to hear the cry of a man right through the prison walls of an alien land or even through the door of a guardhouse in a military camp, in spite of any guard. God has good hearing, and if it is comfort you are wishing for, comfort you will get.

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Maybe you do not need comfort or even want comfort if it were offered you. You want release, and a chance to "get it back" on somebody.

GOD can do many other things for a fellow than comfort him. God can be severe as well as merciful, when a man needs severity. Do not conclude that God is not a dignified and stern Judge.

God is the terrible Master of men when men need that kind of a God. God is able to summon a man at any moment to appear before Him for an accounting. This phase of His character should be considered when a man is in jail for good reasons, and now is the time and place to "make good" with God.

EVENTUALLY one may have more respect for God if one comes to know Him as the Soul of Justice. This comprehension of Him may lead you to "call upon Him" in regard to some things in your past life that you cannot seem to get rid of, even though you may be in prison and in great distress to be free once more. In this frame of mind, this sort of mental

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understanding of yourself, you will find God meeting you more than halfway.

I HAVE heard a rumor to the effect that the thought of God under certain conditions makes a fellow "mad." It is a good thing for a man to get mad about God. It proves that man really does believe in God. Any man well brought up is likely to make an apology when he has been angry with another man without just cause.

If a man understands the essentials in his dealings with other men, apologizing for instance, why should he not be a gentleman in his attitude toward God and make apologies when such are due? I am sure God would appreciate and understand. God is a wonderful Person.

If you do not feel quite equal to the situation, considering some things you know about yourself, you might write an apology to that Person you have wronged by word or deed and ask your Y M C A friend to deliver it to Him. I believe your friend would be glad to act as your ambassador and aid you in securing an interview.

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ONCE you have been in the conscious presence of the Greatest Man in heaven or earth you will feel a certain glorifying of common life and things, an uplift into a divine atmosphere, different and remote from the ordinary.

HOMESICK? This obscure disease baffles description. Only one who has suffered can comprehend. Some declare it is not a disease at all, but an uncanny mental malady subject to environment, and the temporary indisposition of the entire organization.

Homesickness must be a disease, for its other name, suited to the aristocracy of the patient, is nostalgia, as described in the medical works.

This name is significant. Should a plebeian like you and me have an attack it is simply homesickness. If a person of rank in the straight line of aristocracy be attacked, or rather affected, his ailment is nostalgia.

If a person of monetary value, with a slight attack, sends for the doctor, he is apportioned various drugs to be administered "three times daily" with the attend-



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ance of two trained nurses. There is usually an operation indicated.

In our case, yours and mine, we keep our troubles to ourselves if possible, lest the finger of scorn be pointed toward us with the whisper of "Cry baby," in place of an operation.

If there be a particular time in personal history when a person needs sympathy, it is when he is homesick. Try as he will, he cannot "throw it off" without supreme effort, and then it is doubtful. All the world within and without is gray with the gloom of extreme loneliness. Night and day are one, without the glow of sunset or the radiance of sunrise. The best of jokes appeals not to him and food does not satisfy. There is a lump in his throat as if an acorn in the shell had been arrested, able neither to come back nor go on.

There are rumors of antidotes. I am not familiar with any one of the many as being effective save one. Perhaps your Y M C A friend knows of something. But, in event of your being at your wits' end for friends, which is usually the case, try the Man of Sorrows.

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Who ever heard of a disciple of Socrates or of Plato or Browning calling upon Socrates, or Plato, or Browning for help in time of trouble? Did they leave behind, when they went on ahead of the rest, the word of promise, "I will be with him in trouble"?

Does one in extreme difficulties call upon the name of Napoleon, or Washington, or Lincoln, great though they were, on account of their dying assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway"?

In and by the Name of Jesus there is, when a man calls Him by Name, a personal Presence unmistakable, even though the person calling Him by Name has not met Him before.

FORTITUDE and Courage are essential to personal success. By his fortitude a man is able to endure the ills or accidents that come to him and for which he himself is not responsible. Fortitude is a staff to lean upon, a sort of Alpine stock by which a man keeps himself to the trail up the summit.

Courage is the element of a man's character or resolve that enables him to face what he knows that he, himself, is respon-

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sible for, and to "go to it!" Courage is the implement with which a man hews his difficult and painful way to the summit of triumph, or it may be death, through obstacles which he might avoid were he a coward. Courage and Fortitude are twins.

WHAT have you in your kit, that particular kit which a man carries always within him, always within him? Look it over occasionally and find if anything has been picked up on the march which does not belong there and thus has made it heavier or out of proportion. Have you slipped into it inadvertently, a little hate, or malice, or discontent, or self-pity, which cannot help displacing the essentials?

Perhaps you have on the sly added too many memories of the wrong sort, memories that make you blue, or tempt you to neglect the bugle calls to duties, military or personal and private.

A soldier's kit which he carries, slung to his heart's shoulder, holds all his possessions worth mentioning.

IT is human, and of course it is divine, for a man to take a glimpse at another's

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kit. Are your comrades' inside shoulders growing stooped and weak from carrying possible "extras" which a soldier has no business to carry?

UNSPOKEN rebellion against circumstances or orders over which he has no control is almost as bad as outspoken revolt, if a man has a mind to analyze himself. Sullen obedience is marked upon a man's face. He is sure to be registered as a "suspect" by his superiors.

"God loveth a hilarious giver" (Robert J. Burdette). If God loveth a cheerful giver, surely a military officer loveth a hearty soldier.

To be a traitor to God, as God's will and commands are understood, is to invite death penalty. A man may live along for some time parrying blows with his conscience, though sure to fall at last and be left as dead.

It is a terrible thing to have a dead conscience.

IF the soul blushes not at memories, one need not fear the telltale tint of the cheek.

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The happy memory of a kiss upon the forehead of the girl he loves has saved many a soldier from the burning blush of present horror and future stigma.

MAKE a submarine chaser of your resolves, for the principal dangers to character are out of sight, where the devils of the deep sea fight with sharks over the shattered remains of a sunken man.

THERE are deep-sea sharks of despair that chase the foundering ship to devour what they can find. A fellow's real ship, his war ship, cannot be seriously attacked while he is chasing the enemy. A man's ship is his soul, his real life.

You have heard it rumored that if a man "gone wrong" but "turn over a new leaf" he will be "as good as before." Yes, "as good as before," "as white as snow," just between himself and God, for God hath spoken it.

Thank God for God!

But never can a man, once dipped into the indelible dye of vice, be as white, to himself and his fellowkind, to his mother

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and his sweetheart, who one and all may accept him "as he is." However, it is better to turn over the new leaf, and the sooner the better. One would rather be "almost white" than dreadfully black.

It is good to repent before Remorse overtakes a man. Remorse is a relentless foe one may wish he had never met. Remorse aims at the heart of life and is sure of its target.

What shall a man do with Remorse when he is attacked? Repentance wields the only bayonet that can down Remorse. Repentance grapples with Remorse and crushes the life out. Repentance is of God.

Remorse is of that Other whose name I have not used. That Other is God's opponent. If a soldier be fighting the battles of God he will find Repentance. If he is fighting the battles of His opponent, in ever so fascinating a uniform, both himself and the uniform he loves will perish of their own decree.

SEE that you come by your scars honestly, not in brawls with rioters and highwaymen.

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It is written of Lycurgus, King of Sparta, that when he sent his armies abroad he exhorted the soldiers to respect the women of the lands they traversed or subdued.

Joining hands with that great commander of the dark ages, your own General Pershing, upon welcoming the American troops to France, is reported to have exhorted them, "Pledge honor to the women of France wherever you may be located and through whatsoever villages you may pass."

But what of the women who have not been taught respect for themselves? Regret for the woman who has missed her lesson might lead a truly brave man to teach her.

WHY should the memory of a little white uniform bring tears to the eyes of a soldier when he lies down in his lonely corner at night? The little uniform had feet into whose soft warm folds the boy tucked his cold toes. Above the little white nightgown that uniformed the sleepy child bent the face of the mother with her goodnight kiss. The big soldier without any nightie, weary and worn and sick at heart, may be

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sadly comforted by the memory of "just a nightgown."

DIONYSIUS the tyrant, being at table with Spartan soldiers, criticised the menu as being insipid.

The cook replied, "I do not wonder at it, for the seasoning is wanting."

"What seasoning?" questioned the tyrant.

"Running, sweating, fatigue, hunger, and thirst; these are the ingredients with which we season our food."

WHEN the Spartans' aim had routed and broken the enemy's forces, they then pursued them no farther than was necessary to make themselves sure of the victory; after which they retired "thinking it neither glorious nor worthy of Greece to cut in pieces and destroy an enemy that yielded and fled."

BUT why refer to ancient history when we have our own Theodore Roosevelt, who said in an address to the American soldiers, "Love mercy; treat prisoners well; succor the wounded; treat every woman as if she were your sister; care for the little children



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and be tender with the old and helpless. Walk humbly; you will do so if you study the teachings of our Saviour. May the God of justice and mercy have you in His keeping."

TEARS are not for the battle-field. Tears are for times of peace, or for the time between battles when a man may have an attack of nostalgia. Neither are tears for the man on shipboard suffering from a sudden attack of *mal de mer*—if so be he is a person of quality, or if just any person at all the disease is plain seasickness. No, a person doesn't cry when he is really seasick. He is too miserable for tears. It is now that one does not care if he perish.

VERY likely, however, a man may have trouble with his eyes just as the ship leaves the wharf, and until it is out of sight of land. As an excuse for "eye trouble" a man waves his handkerchief incessantly as if bidding adieu to the folks on shore. In reality the handkerchief is necessarily applied very swiftly and cautiously to the brows, or passed down the face if it be a warm day.

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It takes a long while to dry out a handkerchief on the outward voyage.

The same man whose eyes were affected on the outgoing ship may have a similar attack on the one homeward bound. Thus do tears express for the average of us either joy or pain. The difference is only this—when a person is weeping for sorrow he conceals his tears, but when for joy the man of tears cares not if the whole world see him.

I knew a soldier who actually left one little tear on the forehead of his lady-love at parting with her at the wharf. And I knew another who as truly lost two tears upon the forehead of his sweetheart at the end of a return trip. So it is well for the majority of us to be provided with handkerchiefs.

GOD must have had one of His sublime ideas when he thought favorably of providing homesickness for the human family. Were it not for homesickness, we should probably have no home and native land. Unconsciously I believe the most of us are sometimes homesick for parts unknown to mortal eyes, but for whose ac-

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tuality the Lord himself pledged his word. Good and gracious Lord!

It is difficult to determine which is more dangerous or unpleasant to meet single-handed and alone—homesickness or seasickness, *mal de mer* or nostalgia. If a man be attacked by both at the same time, it must be admitted by all observers to be pretty rough.

It seems cruel to laugh at a person when he is seasick, especially if the man who laughs is just over an attack of his own. To laugh at the misfortune of others is usually the expression of a feeble mind; but in case of the prostrate victim of seasickness and under certain conditions to laugh seems justifiable. Should the attack be prolonged, it is quite likely temporarily to cure the patient of self-conceit. The exact time and place for a man to show himself off, who is normally addicted to self-conceit, is on shipboard just out of sight of land, on his first voyage, with a genuine attack of seasickness.

Now here is a peculiar situation. Let a squad of men, for lack of something better

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to do, discuss their various experiences with seasickness. Ten to one there will be a general attack, subtle, sly, but sure. Such is the influence of the mind over its companion-piece, the body, especially when the object of contemplation be in the region of the solar plexus, which the ancients assure us is the throne of the mind.

“WHAT is it to be saved, Mother?” asked a boy of ten. The mother replied, “My boy, you know the little red card in front of Willie’s house, and how you and the other children do not pass that way because Willie has diphtheria?” “Yes, Mother.”

“And the little red sign is to save all of you from taking diphtheria.” “Yes, Mother.”

“And you remember when you backed off from the pier into the water and a fisherman came in his boat and picked you up?” “Yes, Mother.”

“He saved you, didn’t he, my boy?” “Yes, Mother.”

“And when you were playing with the matches you smuggled from the cellar, Father punished you?” “Yes, Mother.”

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“And that was Father’s way of saving you from being hurt, wasn’t it?” “Yes, Mother.”

THERE are famous entomologists who would trade their professional chairs with a soldier, almost any day (when a battle is not in progress), just for the opportunities the soldier has for studying insects and plants. A soldier having a few otherwise idle minutes on his hands may collect specimens of insect and plant life, send to any university for identification, and so improve himself and become a member of the world of nature workers.

WHAT have you found in minute life deep down in the trenches you have been digging? A man I know, hard at work digging a sewer main in his city, came upon a nest of the wonderful little honey ants which he secured in the top of his hat. Afterwards he sent them to me, telling me that while his back was aching with the stooping and scooping he experienced absolute relief from his suffering, at the instant he discovered the little insects with their transparent globules of honey iridescent

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in the sunlight. These little honey people live out of sight in their own original trenches, and must be given moist earth in confinement.

THERE are hundreds of interesting insect folk like the so-called thousand-legged worms, and snails, and beetles, who do not resent being called "bugs" by those unacquainted with them. And there are the butterflies which often fly by their own air-planes from one location to another, a mile of them in orderly march.

IF a soldier have but the wit about him to gather to his mind loads of common knowledge as a bee gathers pollen on her thigh, he will have time for profitable musings, as well as the satisfaction of adding his mite to the general storehouse of information.

IAM in love with my nurse! I am wondering if she returns my love or if she can understand the depth of mine. I would like to ask her age, but can only guess it. After all, age counts for nothing if the heart be young.

Perhaps I would better not mention love

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to my nurse, but wait for developments. It is said that a patient always is in love with the nurse. I do not doubt it or wonder at it.

My feelings toward my nurse are indescribable. She is like God in a little human way. I am grateful to her for her patience, and firmness, and gentle authority, though I believe she could be the reverse of gentleness should I obtrude between her and her duty. That is the trouble in making love to a nurse—one runs into danger of obtruding between the nurse and her life-work.

We have much in common. Every nurse has much in common with a patient. Sometimes she must be the very soul of her patient, steadfast of purpose, assuring, directing even in trifles in your weakness, but retreating at the advance of health, that her patient may learn all over again the lessons of self-reliance.

My nurse calls me her "victim." She shall be my "victim" when once again I am able to outrun and outwit mine adversaries.

ONE day when my boy comrade joined

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the ranks, he came to say "Good-by." A great, splendid, true, and faithful fellow he is; have you met him?

At his good-by he asked me for a word, a single sentiment or promise that should go with him and abide with him. I responded with my two hands upon his two shoulders and his hands upon my shoulders, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

I ONCE wrote Red Cloud, Sioux Chief, whom I had known and esteemed, to send me a simple memento from his buffalo-skin tepee on the banks of the Washita. The Government had presented him with an American flag as reward for loyalty and erected a staff for it, from which I had seen it wave gloriously. But I had no thought of the flag; I thought he might send me a spray from the bullberry bush or a strip from the deer-skin door that swung catercornered from the entrance of his lodge.

When the memento came it was a tiny strip cut from the depending corner of the



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flag and a sliver from the weather-worn staff. The noble old Chief wrote his reply by the interpreter, "I can think of nothing I would rather send you, my friend, than these fragments. They are proof that I remain loyal to the Government according to my promise."

THERE is no such thing in the affairs of life as a blank in a normal memory. Write your memory brim full of what is worth while. We write, and then we read; we cannot erase.

It is a good thing to "make believe" in a good cause. Stick to the make-believe doctrine. Make believe you are not tired to death in the long monotonous training; make believe you are not thirsty when the other fellow is crying for water; make believe you are just hiking up the home mountain when the long march seems never to end; make believe the pack on your shoulders is just little Jimmie and you are taking him pickaback to school.

It is a calamity to lose one's head; having lost it once it is easier to lose it again.

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## *Thoughts for the Kit-Bag*

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To lose one's balance is to forfeit control of one's self. A man's head is the throne of his thought; see that it be not abdicated.

FEAR at the right time and place is proof of a man's courage. Fear at the wrong time and place is proof of a man's weakness.

It is a glory to have a great commander who is worthy of honor. An officer must have been himself loyal and true and obedient and deferent. Honor him heart and soul, my soldier friend, for there is yet a greater Commander whom he himself must honor.

MEMORY may be a cruel master or the best and dearest of bosom friends. Unconsciously to ourselves we are sketching the background of years to come. Let us dip our brushes in the indelible tints of truth and honor, that Memory may not deride us.

I HAVE learned one thing essential to recovery, and that is "to eat well and often." Food builds new tissue and also

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keeps up the courage. Food also strengthens the will to recover, which is half the battle.

DID the hand of a young girl ever rest in yours with a delicacy of touch that made you dream happy dreams of life-long purity of purpose? May the memory of that gentle hand protect you in an alien land or amid the vicissitudes of cantonment life and help you to build true to your dreams. She too had dreams.

IMPATIENCE at delay; to wait; to bide one's time; to long for achievement of coveted conditions; to remain when one yearns for "the front"—these are circumstances that demand a resolute spirit.

To wait for the slow pace of convalescence when one longs to be himself again; to bide the tedious preparation of the body for the return of strength—eleven weeks, and still must I wait; but the thrasher bird sings for me and some invisible joy of patience will sing in the heart of a soldier in a stranger's hospital. Sometimes the song is but a low twitter, almost an inaudible murmur, as

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if expression were inarticulate but impelling.

The weary heart, rising above its weakness of speech, must articulate cheer to the weary body; for the body can maintain or improve its strength only by the help of the heart. Take heart then, soldier friend of mine!

Here comes a comrade with the checker board! Thank heaven for a checker board. Let us play checkers!

My thrasher bird above me in the tree-top thought of something he wanted to say in the middle of the night and sang it out to the moonlight and me; just as I, too, am thinking of what I would say to you, my soldier, here in the cheery moonlight.

Sing, thrasher bird, sing; sing, soul of me, for the glory of daybreak is close at hand.

Sing, my soldier, sing for the glory of a tomorrow.

I SENT you pencils and pads by the Y M C A. Write a letter to somebody, if only to God, as did the little orphan girl, and see what comes of it.

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SEE how near we come to camping together, the soldier at the far-away front or in the nearer cantonment, myself lying on my cot writing to you, perhaps with the selfsame thought and perhaps with no less of a wound than yourself, and the thrasher bird in the tree top. Turn again to the title page and look him in the eye.

To enjoy the sweet perfume of a flower one may simply catch a whiff of its breath in passing; again one must be close, kiss it as it were. Love it.

THE grown-ups among the plants, the stems and leaves after the flowers have passed, hoard within their outer guard or envelope the sweetness you covet. They do not breathe it upon you, thrusting their virtues on the stranger, but crush them, and behold, their fragrance comes forth to greet you, unsparing and satisfying. Break a stem of lavender or sweet mary and the sweetness of a faded life entrances you.

A human life may be crushed and broken for its own sake. The hidden and hoarded sweetness which, imprisoned, was

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## *Thoughts for the Kit-Bag*

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denied to another, escapes to satisfy and revive the stranger.

I WONDER if the limbs of the tree above me need exercise, and the foliage, which is constantly moving in the wind. The trunk seems to sit still like an old person. Looking up and out upon the trees, I fancy the leaves are impatient to be gone, and the slender twigs long to let go of the mother's apron strings.

WISH you had a pillow—of the sort you used to nestle your head into at home when a child, tucking it well up around your ears with a good-night punch so you mightn't hear the call to "get up" in the morning?

Pillows have played an important part in the history of all time. When Samson accepted the lap of Delilah for a pillow he lost everything he had in the world, which "everything" was his strength. Samson wasn't worth a cent when his strength was all gone over to the enemy.

AND there was Sisera, who was quite "off his base" when he saw a pretty woman. Knowing his weakness, as any

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man knows his own weakness, Sisera should have taken a country road instead of a walk in the city. He literally "lost his head" to Jael, all because he accepted her invitation to sleep upon the softest pillows the house afforded. Jael was merciful to Sisera in that she deprived him of life, and so little reason as he was supposed to have had.

NOT every soft pillow is a good one, nor every hard pillow a bad one. A traveler may pray for a pillow and be given a rock, not knowing what may come of it.

HERE is a story which I believe to be perfectly true. There isn't a feature of it to be challenged. We know that men do get lost on the desert, and that rocks are mailed sentinels of the desert, and that some men are in the habit of dreaming and of telling their dreams to the family. Some people have nightmare. But the dream of the story is no nightmare. God does not send nightmares to frighten faithful travelers and loyal soldiers. If a man gets a nightmare he deserves it, and no mistake.

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A CERTAIN young man of the long ago grew too tired to go another mile. It was almost dark and he had to sleep exactly where he was. He did so wish he had a pillow—nothing but sand and stones in sight. A tired man is in his right mind when he wishes for a good thing, provided he looks around to find the object of his wish! One must hunt for the thing he wishes. Only in fairy stories may a person stand still and have his wish come true.

It is not told in the story if the man was homesick or heartsick or just “tired to death,” with blistered heels and cracked lips. But it is written of him that he longed for a pillow. The looking around for something helped him out of his difficulty, and though the pillow he discovered was as hard as a rock, it helped him to the best night’s rest ever, with a dream thrown in.

It is just like God to surprise a man with a dream. Nothing in sight but hard times, like so many desert stones, unsympathetic, barren of comradeship, cold and unpromising. Nothing in sight save white rocks, in shape and size not unlike the



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pillow he so much coveted. He lifted one of the rocks into place and went to sleep. No thought had he of dreaming; he just wanted to sleep for tomorrow's march.

ONE may be something of a dreamer without being absent-minded. A dreamer may enjoy his visions while another man is grumbling about the might-have-beens and the probable may-bes. It is said that the brain goes on its usual course during sleep. We would better have a care about the route the brain is going on when awake.

THE sun looked into the face of the young man in the morning, with a merry twinkling light, as if it said, "How do you like rocks for a pillow, young man?"

The young man had no time to pay attention to his cramped neck or the sore muscles of his shoulders. He had dreamed a dream; all on account of going to sleep on a rocky pillow without grumbling, nor even swearing. The name of God was on his lips, but not in profanity. How was it possible for a man to swear about his pillow when he had that vision in his heart?

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For want of a vision some men do swear,  
so it is said.

If a man hasn't had any vision of his own, it would be a good thing to borrow one from this traveler. Second-hand visions come in handy when a man is so dreadfully poor in his soul that he cannot even think a good thought for his hungry heart's breakfast.

ALL on account of that dream he had in the night the young man arose and set the stones, upon which his weary head had laid, all up nice in a simple little pile, or cache as it were, in and among which he hid a prayer for the use of young men of all ages whose pillows or resting-places are particularly hard. And God has seen to it that the prayer has been preserved without must or stain or mildew.

No munitions of the enemy have scattered that little cache of rocks, and no storm has blotted out the record of that vision and its accompanying prayer.

OCCUPATION is glorious; to be unoccupied is to be miserably debilitated. Employment is the antidote for the slow

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poison of despair or the deadly bite of resentment.

OUR dreamer of the hard pillow, of whom I was thinking yesterday, came to a point in his dream when he needed timber to make it work out right. He had the timber within him wherewith to supplement the rocks, the rocks being simply a foundation for an upward slant of glory, or to glory. With such timber, which was within him before the dream, did Jacob in his dream construct a ladder.

But what about the sanity of the man? Can a ladder stand by itself, even on a rock foundation, with no visible provision for its upper end to lean against?

If a man do his duty by the hard things, setting up his thoroughfare skyward, God Himself or His angels will attend to the upper end of the ladder.

AND when the daybreak chased away the shadows, revealing the cold monotony of desert and rocks, Jacob hugged his dream to his heart and vowed a great vow, something about doing right all the rest of his life, to get even with the blessed dream.

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He was so gloriously full of his vision that he pledged all sorts of beautiful promises. And the echo of that prayer on the lonely desert has somehow come rolling down the ages.

LET no man be afraid of hard things. Hard things make a good foundation upon which to rest earth's end of the ladder skyward. Let no man fear there will be no vision. No need is there of further visions when one has before one's eyes the vision of Jesus Christ. "Set up on the earth" once, no man blasphemer can tear Him down, for the ultimate, the final, the shining Way "reaches unto heaven," imperishable, eternal.

IT is a good thing to be the dreamer of dreams that are worth while. We may not see the angels of God ascending and descending, but there are little visions in the night very comforting and refreshing when one sees nothing but rocks ahead and behind him.

IT is not good that life be too serene. Better to do battle with the waves on a

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rocky coast than to drift aimlessly on a tideless lagoon.

WIT is the gift of God. If you haven't any wit, get it by hook or crook and pray for it with all your might. It will serve as reserve forces behind the lines. Wit is the athlete of the soul. Without wit a man becomes anemic in his soul.

THOUGHTS that come to us, if worthy ones, are like fagots saved up to light the evening fires of life. If a "bum" thought knocks at your door, pack it off like the hoodlum that it is, or give it a stab with the Sword which the Y M C A brother will explain is in the hand of every man's soul.

GOD is with the lonely man. God is able to glorify hard things and hard times into pedestals for heavenly thoroughfares to begin with.

By hard things in the way God is able to extort from a man such vows as do not appear in dreams, and then so to fill the man with His own strength that lovingly, faithfully, that man will keep all of his promises made in an ecstasy of joy. God's

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promises invite man's promises. Man loves nothing better than a promise from a person who is able to keep his word. God loves nothing better than a promise from those He is spending all His long eternity to serve and save.

“A GOD like a super-bishop in an apron and nice top hat— O God, you are God of Battles; forbid that we come to that. God, you are God of Soldiers, merry and rough and kind. Give to your sons an earth and a heaven more to their mind, meat and drink for the body, laughter and song for the soul, and fighting, and clean quick death to end and complete the whole.”

OCCUPATION nourishes the waning vitality of submission. Thank God for work.

BLOSSOMS are the children of the plants. Their sweetness is absolute joy and beauty. The lover of children and flowers owns an inexhaustible mine of satisfaction, happiness even.

But any mine must be “worked” to be

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profitable. One must study the plants if these be one's mine, discover their possibilities and the source of their life.

It is now fourteen weeks, and health is fast coming. Autumn tints are weaving themselves into the trees and fields, but my California thrasher bird continues to sing. He will sing on and yet more continuously until Merry Christmas and Happy New Year bid you, my soldier friend, and me, to be about the business of a new life.

MAY thoughts of mine, conveyed to you in this strange way, bring peace or harmony or patience to you like a psalm. Red-lipped and red of cheek, Friendship and Unity of Purpose take long breaths, and skip the things that hurt—or better, glorify the hurt we sometimes suffer, with a balm that outwits pain.

MY spirit laughs with glee that I am yet alive, in spite of pain impossible for tongue to give recital of. Scars are but memories of the flesh. Let scars, your scars or mine, be recollections visible of triumph over pain.

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MAY flowers of hope and strength and faith bestrew your march to Somewhere—God knows where, God knows.

And we somewhere, some day as well as now, will join glad hands with all who hope and wait, and bide our time to conquer all things hostile to the better life.

NEVER say die, my boy, if your gallant ship goes down;

Cling to your friendly spar.

As you march through the desert, hot and brown,

Keep your eye on one white star.

With grit in your soul and fire in your eye,

Crank up your courage and never say die.

Never say die, my boy, when the firing line grows thin,

And you fall with the rest,

But hark to the beat, through the battle din,

Of the heart in your breast.

Desert not your body, the Soul's best ally,

Stay with it, stay with it, and never say die.



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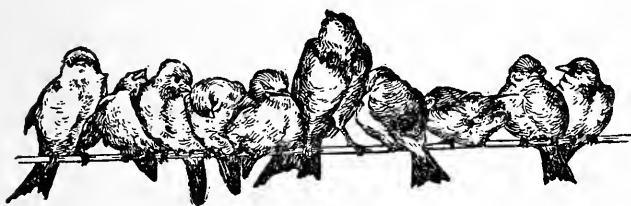
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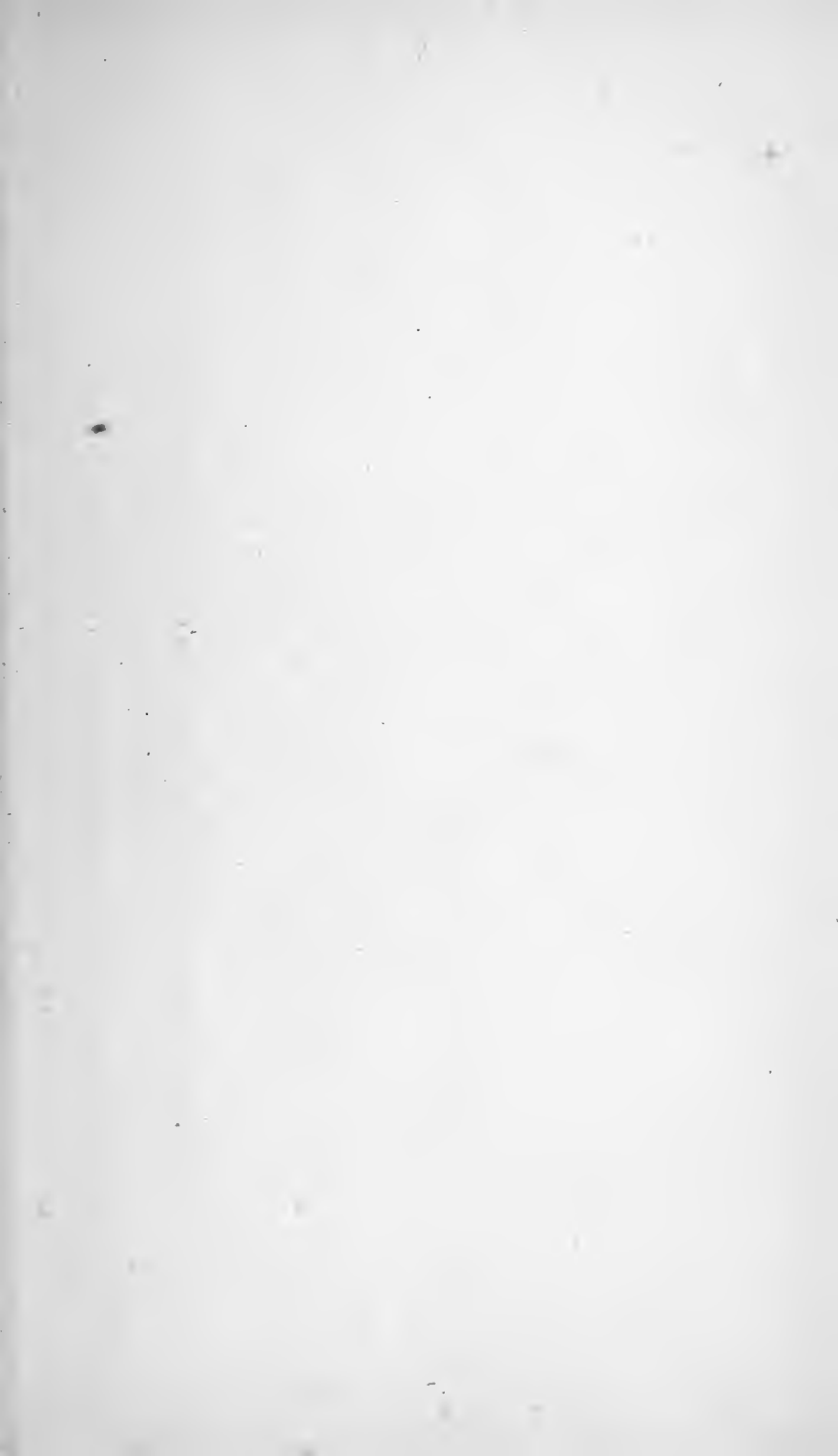
Never say die, my boy, when the hurt of  
the wound halts the breath.

Ward off the weakness of Fear  
With the bayonet charge of Faith; and  
Death

Shall not ever strike you here.  
Bite your lip, while the aim of the foe  
you defy,  
Cling to the flag of your courage and  
never say die.



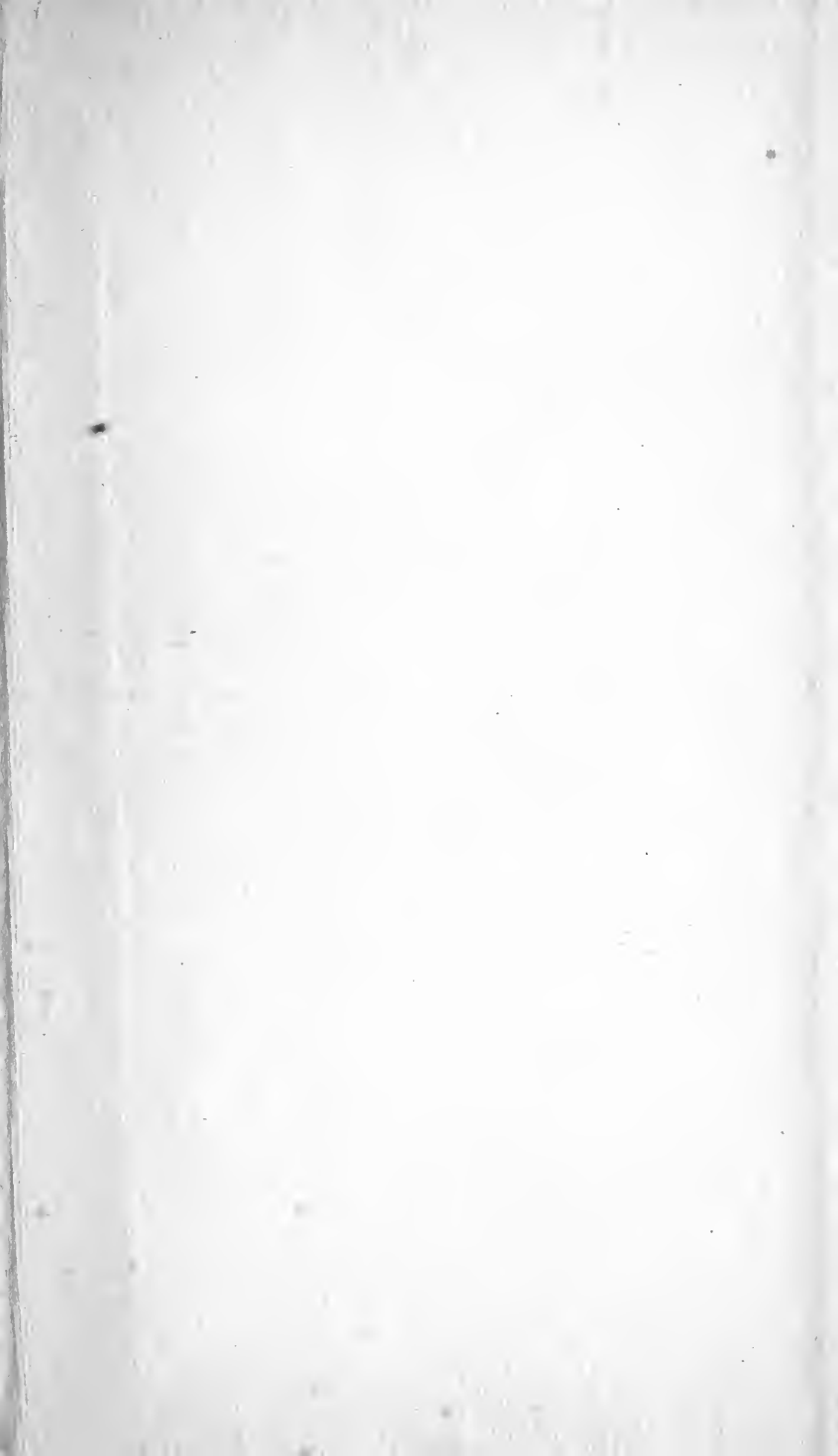












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